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the oddities of life and his brave determination that no mere officialism shall prevent his record of the best stories which his voyages have produced. It is to this that we owe our knowledge of the great effect produced in French Africa by the red morocco boots of a visiting Minister of Colonies. To the same zeal we owe our first intimation of sad events which happen in the Bronx "Zoo". All French colonies are divisible into such as have snakes and such as have none. A keeper—this is told on page 303—wishing to feed the boa constrictor, was seized by the monster and at once wrapped in his coils. He would have perished unpitiably without the effort of fifteen men who ran to his assistance and unwrapped him, not without suffering, from the terrible pressure. Yet we hasten to remark that in the heart of this charmingly discursive tale are four chapters which are quite the best we have seen on the topic, those which deal with the foods of the French colonies, the cost of living, the dwellings which colonial settlers should dwell in and the varied products of the soil. WILLIAM CHURCHILL.

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

The Structure of the Atmosphere in Clear Weather. A Study of Soundings with Pilot Balloons. By C. J. P. Cave. xii and 144 pp. Maps, ills., index. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York. University Press, Cambridge, 1912. 10s. 6d. 11 x 9.

Only a few years ago the use of such a sub-title as " A Study of Soundings with Pilot Balloons " in a monograph dealing with a meteorological subject would have been impossible. "Soundings" of the free air, and "pilot balloons " are developments of yesterday. To-day, almost every month brings to the reviewer's desk some new publication dealing with the results of free air studies. One of the most recent of these publications is a careful study of the results of 200 pilot balloon ascents from Ditcham, on the South Downs of England, by C. J. P. Cave, whose name is already well known in connection with such work. The methods of work are described in detail. The data are tabulated for all the ascents, and diagrams are given for about fifty cases. The vertical distribution of wind directions on several different ascents is very clearly illustrated by means of photographs of models in which, for various altitudes, the wind directions are actually shown by means of arrows, mounted one above the other on a vertical rod. This method seems to us singularly effective, and withal very simple. It would serve admirably for use in the classroom. Mr. Cave has classified the types of the varieties of structure observed in the atmosphere, and has presented, clearly and systematically, his facts and conclusions. It should be remembered by those students of meteorology—if there be any such—who still prefer to confine their attention to the earth's surface rather than to ascertain what is known regarding the free air, that recent researches have tended to show that changes of pressure originate at considerable elevations above the surface, and that therefore the knowledge of the structure and conditions of the atmosphere in the region just below the stratosphere is very important in our studies of the surface pressures and of weather. R. DEC. WARD.

Geodesy. Effect of Topography and Isostatic Compensation upon the Intensity of Gravity (second paper). By William Bowie. 28 pp. Maps. *Special Publication No. 12*, Coast and Geodetic Survey, 1912.

This publication of the Coast and Geodetic Survey supplements a report with the same title by Hayford and Bowie which appeared early in the year and which described in detail the Hayford (or New) method of making gravity reductions for the topography of the earth and its isostatic compensation. It gave the necessary tables for making the reductions and also the results obtained for eighty-nine gravity stations in the United States and sixteen stations not in this country.

The " Second Paper " is a report on all of the stations in the United States, 124 in number, and ten stations in Alaska.

In computing the effect of topography and its compensation upon the intensity of gravity at a station each portion of the earth's crust was assumed to